

NASA Policy Statement

Adapting to a Changing Climate

Scientific evidence continues to mount that the Earth's climate is changing. While the scope, severity and pace of climate impacts are difficult to predict, it is clear that climate variability and climate change could have important impacts on NASA's ability to fulfill its mission and thus merits a proactive and integrated response. NASA's goal is climate resilient NASA Centers. Recognizing that each Center offers vital products, services and corporate knowledge, NASA's policy is to apply NASA's scientific expertise and products so that we can incorporate climate information into our decision-making and planning, create innovative, sustainable and flexible solutions, and share best practices.

To implement this policy, NASA commits to:

- Undertake climate adaptation¹ planning and apply the best science expertise and information available.
- Apply the “guiding principles”¹ and planning “flexible framework”¹ for climate change adaptation developed by the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force.
- Integrate climate adaptation planning and actions into agency programs, policies and operations.
- Consider potential climate impacts in long-term planning, setting priorities for scientific research and investigations, and making decisions affecting the agency resources, programs, policies, and operations.
- Develop an agency-wide adaptation plan.
- Coordinate with other agencies and interagency efforts, nationally and internationally, on climate change adaptation issues, and share climate change adaptation planning information with the world.

Successful execution of this policy relies on NASA Center support – the place where NASA's operations and mission are accomplished. Center commitment will be necessary to analyze how climate change may impact its ability to achieve its mission, policy, program, and operation goals by reviewing existing programs, operations, policies, and authorities to:

- Identify potential impacts of climate on the installation's area of responsibility

¹ Found in Progress Report of the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force (October 5, 2010) at URL: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ceq/Interagency-Climate-Change-Adaptation-Progress-Report.pdf> <accessed 21 April 2011>

- Prioritize and implement response actions and coordinate with local efforts
- Continuously assess and improve capacity to adapt to present and future changes in the climate.

Successfully adapting to a changing climate requires active participation by the people responsible for implementing efforts and activities, as experienced by NASA climate scientists while working with multiple city officials in their adaptation planning efforts. A NASA Headquarters Advisory Council on Climate Adaptation already exists with members from NASA's Office of Strategic Infrastructure (OSI) and Science Mission Directorate (SMD). This policy designates the Center Sustainability Officers (CSOs) as the persons who will coordinate Center adaptation activities with the Agency's Senior Sustainability Officer, the senior Agency official responsible for implementing the required climate change adaptation planning actions.

NASA climate scientists have already prepared historic and projected climate information for each of NASA's Centers and NASA OSI and SMD will sponsor two Center-level climate impact and adaptation workshops by the end of calendar year 2012. NASA will continue to support climate assessment activities through its annual SMD Research Opportunities in Space and Earth Sciences (ROSES) grants, which will be open for participation by the full scientific community. Additional efforts through international partnerships and STEM are also anticipated in the next 18 months.

It is NASA's intent to formalize its policy on climate change adaptation (and sustainability) within an existing NASA Procedural Directive (NPD) - 8500, Environmental Management. The revised NPD would be signed by NASA's Administrator and align with NASA's governance structure.

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